

EDITORIAL.

THE TRANSFER of the National Herbarium from the building of the Department of Agriculture to the care of the Smithsonian Institution, and its storage in the National Museum, is a movement that commends itself to every botanist. That this great collection should so long have been exposed to destruction by fire does not reflect much credit upon our Congresses; and as the present arrangement seems to have been easily effected without any congressional action the long time exposure does not reflect much credit upon previous administrations of the Department of Agriculture. The Smithsonian Institution does not furnish more room, for the National Museum is already overcrowded, but it furnishes safety, and is the proper depository of government scientific collections. In the transfer, the collections of the Divisions of Vegetable Pathology and of Forestry are not included, and the Department of Agriculture also wishes to retain the grasses. In our judgment all of these collections should pass under the care of the Smithsonian Institution, for the same reasons obtain for their transfer as for the transfer of the other collections. The botanist of the Department of Agriculture retains his position of Curator, so that a transfer does not put any obstacle in the way of use. The collections of the Division of Vegetable Pathology and of Forestry are in charge of other curators, so that it may be well to preserve their autonomy, but the great and in many respects unique collection of grasses should certainly be included in the transfer.

THIS COMMENDABLE movement, however, is but a temporary expedient, for it means storage rather than working room. The Botanical Club, and the other organizations comprising the same body of botanists, through their annual resolutions on this subject, seem to have been effective thus far, and should be encouraged to continue their effort until a suitable building is provided on Smithsonian grounds. Much has already been done in the elimination of congressional clerks and replacing them with botanists. A building and an adequate corps of competent investigators are due such a collection as the National Herbarium. We trust that this matter will be taken up at every meeting of botanists, until the National Herbarium has a proper equipment of room and of men.